

# The Broken Rifle #108:

## Police militarisation



In recent years, organisations affiliated to War Resisters' International have observed a growing militarisation of policing in their home countries with internal security forces beginning to look and act ever more like domestic armies. It is increasingly clear that a shift towards militarised policing is taking place across each and every continent. The idea to create an online resource on the militarisation of policing was born from a desire to join the dots between what is happening in individual countries and paint a clearer picture of the wider global trend. This issue of The Broken Rifle is part of this project.

Our new police militarisation resource is now available online at: [www.wri-irg.org/en/police-militarisation/](http://www.wri-irg.org/en/police-militarisation/). It can be used to explore the militarisation of policing by country and by topic with links to articles that examine cross-cutting issues in greater depth. The aim of the resource is to illustrate how the militarisation of police forces around the world is happening, how it is rooted in deeper structural violence and to bring to the fore stories of resistance from communities across the globe. It is hoped that it will act as a networking and solidarity tool for those already experiencing the impact of militarised policing.

We hope that this will be a resource that continues to expand and grow so if you have information or ideas that you would like to share, please get in touch at [info@wri-irg.org](mailto:info@wri-irg.org).

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## Sarah Robinson

# The militarisation of policing and internal security

*Protesters face police at a sit-in on the beach at Karbabad, Bahrain, in June 2012 during the Bahraini uprising. They were met with tear gas.*

The visible face of police militarisation is the use of militarised equipment and body armour; of sniper rifles and tanks facing down protesters in Ferguson, United States, and of heavily armoured vehicles patrolling the streets of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. But such conspicuous militarisation is merely a symptom – an end-product – of a militarised mindset that sees those being policed not as members of a community in need of protection but as a threat.

### The perception of threat

Militarisation is driven by “the idea that the world is a dangerous place” (Enloe, 2016). It is a process that relies upon the widespread social acceptance of a narrative of insecurity. There is always a new emergency just around the corner. The ‘war on terror’ has been used to mobilise a culture of fear across the world from France to Kenya to Indonesia but whether the ‘war’ that is being waged is on terror – or on drugs or on gangs – the response of the state is always framed in the language of militarised conflict.

A soldier is schooled to assume a threat before the need for help and to respond accordingly by eliminating it (Tabassi and Dey, 2016). But whereas the role of a soldier is supposedly to confront a threat coming from outside – an external enemy – increasingly the danger is identified as coming from within. When militarised language is used to talk about perceived internal threats, the danger that is to be eliminated is to be found on the streets of our towns and villages and the war that is being waged is a war on our own communities, who have themselves become the enemy.

### The enemy within

The militarisation of policing is nothing new and police forces in colonial and other oppressive regimes have long sought to control rather than protect but increasingly the boundaries between what is considered to be internal and external security are becoming blurred. In ‘The Fourth World War’, Marcela Paz describes a state of low-intensity war where “it is increasingly hard to make a distinction between military and police activity”. Whilst taking care to be “conscious of how

state and global violence differ across contexts” (Tabassi and Issa, 2017) and not to conflate repressive policing with the great violence occurring in some parts of the world, it is possible to recognise a shift away from the notion of ‘defence’ – which “used to refer to protecting a country’s own borders” – to ‘national security’; an idea which “requires the country to be militarily prepared, in a state of constant alert” and emphasises “the idea of the enemy within” (Paz, 2017). More and more, the “wars of states are being fought within their borders – often against their own people – by police forces” (Tabassi and Dey, 2016).

### Militarised policing is racist policing

The militarised mind, trained to see threat, sees surroundings filled with potential enemies who become dehumanised and ‘other’ when looked at in this light. Those identified as potential enemies are almost always, for one reason or another, on the margins of society; they may be political activists, social dissidents, gender nonconformists or poor. But, almost always, they will also be perceived as ‘other’ in racialised terms. The militarisation of policing is a militarisation against minority ethnic groups and people of colour the world over.

The ‘war on terror’ has raised the spectre of an Islamic threat and is used to justify militarised policing that targets Muslim communities. Indigenous groups such as the Mapuche in Chile are marked out for protecting their land and resources. Entire neighbourhoods populated by people of colour such as the favelas of Rio de Janeiro are deemed a threat to social cohesion and blackness is conflated with criminality and met with violence. Militarised policing is used to sustain the colonial occupations of the lands of one ethnic group by another, such as in Palestine.

Militarised borders define who is, and who is not, a citizen: who has rights and merits the protection of the state and who is a threat to the social order. The Schengen Area allows for free movement of people (and, of course, capital) within Fortress Europe whilst undesirables drown on its shores. The militarised border regime “based on the exclusion of black and brown people” (Segantini, 2017) “sustains cultural notions of relative human worth” (Linke, 2010 ). It operates “as an amorphous buffer zone against global mobility and the presumed threat of race” (Linke, 2010).

Militarised policing is supposed to make society safer but the security that it is supposed to ensure is the security of selected groups at the expense of those not deemed to be of value. We are not expected to interrogate whose safety is being protected. Militarised policing did not protect Tamir Rice, a black child who was shot dead by police in Cleveland, United States, in 2014 for playing with a toy gun. In West Papua, far from guaranteeing their safety, the “Indonesia police are making West Papua unsafe for Papuans. The police have become the main actor perpetrating human rights violations against West Papuans” (MacLeod, Moiwend and Pilbrow, 2016).

### A militarised mindset

The militarised mindset is nurtured by police trainings which simulate scenarios of extreme threat and encourage knee-jerk militarised responses. In the United States, the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) runs a training called ‘Talk-Fight-Shoot-Leave’ which “encourages use-of-force

solutions and ‘warrior mentalities’ over de-escalation tactics” (Tabassi and Issa, 2016). Such trainings are also often racist, such as the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) trainings held in the United States which use negative racial stereotypes in their dramatisations and regularly host Islamophobic speakers. Trainings are one of the key mechanisms through which militarised policing is exported.

There is a widespread use of militaristic tactics and weaponry. Sometimes actual military weapons find their way from the military into the hands of the police. Policing tactics are often indiscriminate and disproportionate to the threat posed and can be indistinguishable from those of the army uses against enemy combatants. There is a blurring of the lines between the police and the military with police units adopting increasingly militarised behaviours and the military taking on policing roles.

Militarisation is deeply rooted in patriarchy. Militarised structures prize masculine values such as obedience to authority, hierarchy and control and reflect these back into society: reinforcing gender norms and roles which define “masculinity as powerful and aggressive and femininity as humble and passive” (Laska and Molander, 2012) and the gendered order “in which men exercise power over women” (Cockburn, 2010), irrespective of women’s direct participation in them.

Militarised attitudes may show themselves in the increased use or threat of violence although police brutality does not mean militarisation in itself. Rather, it may be symptomatic of a way of dealing with an ‘enemy’, as are the tools – the machine guns and tear gas – that are chosen to carry out the task at hand.

### Who profits?

Militarised policing works in favour of those who are already powerful. As in Bahrain, it is used to quell dissent and crush protest. It keeps those lower down the social order in their place. Gizele Martins describes how when the favelas of Rio de Janeiro were occupied by the army in 2014 and 2015, one soldier was sent in for every fifty-five inhabitants. The state, which had never seen fit to provide the same ratio of teachers or doctors, was willing to spend vast sums of money to maintain its control. Militarised policing protects the interests of the capitalist, imperialist elite: their financial institutions and sites of power, their factories and shops and the mines, quarries and pipelines that they use to extract natural resources that do not belong to them from land that is not theirs. It protects their ability to exploit and harm the environment and profit from the labour of others.

Militarised policing also directly benefits those who profit from the provision of privatised security services and the sale of militarised equipment and training to police forces around the world. The homeland security industry has grown at 5% annually since 2008 despite a worldwide recession (Buxton and Hayes, 2016 ).

### Demilitarisation

Whilst a clear shift towards militarised policing can be observed across the world, there exist numerous examples of attempts to demilitarise the police; often in response to the end of an armed conflict or the fall of an authoritarian regime. In most of these examples, militarised policing has tended to resurface in an adapted form. The South Korean police force is currently undergoing a process of demilitarisation with the



abolition of conscription to the police force as part of military service by 2023. A main role of police conscripts has been to confront protesters during political demonstrations. It remains to be seen what the outcome of this step towards demilitarisation will be and what its effects it will have on the wider police force.

In Colombia, conversely, there are concerns about the militarisation of policing in a context of demilitarisation after the signing of peace accords between the government and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in 2016. Since the peace accords were signed, over one hundred leaders from different social movements have been assassinated. A new military doctrine called the Damascus Doctrine is being developed by the armed forces which consists of strengthening the armed forces to play a role as the principal interlocutor between the state and civil society.

## Resistance

True demilitarisation will require challenging the militarised

mindset that sustains militarised policing. A main aim of our new web resource is to bring the fore stories of resistance from communities across the globe from Kenya to Brazil to South Africa and the United States and so act as a networking and solidarity tool for those already experiencing the impact of militarised policing. We hope that you find them inspiring.

*Sarah Robinson worked at the War Resisters' International London office for a year from September 2016 researching the different ways police forces around the world are being militarised and developing an online resource on police militarisation. Her work was funded by Quaker Peace and Social Witness.*



*This is a transcription of an interview. The video can be found here: [wri-irg.org/en/story/2017/gizele-martins-militarisation-favelas](http://wri-irg.org/en/story/2017/gizele-martins-militarisation-favelas)*

I am Gizele Martins, I am thirty-one years old, and I have been working as an alternative communicator and journalist in my community for the last fifteen years. I research and investigate the “favelas” (shanty towns) and their militarisation.

These two themes are deeply related to my own life. I began working in community communication after witnessing the injustices which are perpetrated in the favela in which I was born, which is the “favela da Maré”.

The favela da Maré is located in the lower-income northern part of Rio de Janeiro, which is one of the richest cities in Brazil. It stretches between three of the main express roads in Rio: the “Red Line”, the “Yellow Line” and “Brazil Avenue”.

These routes connect the international airport, which is Rio’s main airport, to down-town Rio and to the richer southern part of the city.

The favela da Maré is surrounded by these three express roads and the repression against its residents and the militarisation process that it has been suffering is also related to its strategic location near the international airport and Guanabara Bay. In fact, Maré grew up upon landfills built up over the years where the sea once was (“maré” means “tide”).

As I said, I began working in community communication when I was fifteen or sixteen years old because I saw many injustices happening on a daily basis in that favela. The police would come and kill young people, execute them, invade residents’ houses, rape women; the City Hall would come and remove people from its houses.



So I felt the need to tell those stories, to tell the people what was happening inside Maré, but to go beyond what was being published in the criminal section of the mainstream newspapers. Because in Brazilian traditional and commercial media, the favela only shows up in the criminal section.

It only appears when 'violence' is the news and its residents are shown as those whom the people should fear, those who should be killed, those who should disappear from the city. They are represented as the problem itself.

So I began working as an alternative communicator to denounce the state, the police, the City Hall, the government and to write a different narrative based on the memory of the people who live in the favelas: black people, natives, refugees, people from north-eastern Brazil who have left their land and migrated to Rio looking for jobs.

The community media that I am engaged in talks about our identity, our culture, our music; it explains how the people who work harder than others to build this country are pictured as lazy, as those who do not have anything to say, as those who should be feared. As those who have nothing to do and should be banned from some areas of the city, as those who are considered dangerous because they are poor. As those who are dangerous, violent, criminals, because they are black. So the message that we send through the favela is that we are being marginalised, we are violated, criminalised by the state, by the terrorist state which is Brazil.

I also participate in other community media groups in other favelas, as my work has led me to get to know them. There are more than a thousand favelas in Rio today. I support groups of mothers and relatives who have lost their children to police violence. I collaborate with other alternative media groups who keep a watch on what is going on in Maré and in other favelas. I also offer training and workshops about the favelas and about community communication, about racism, gender issues and memory, creating different narratives about the favelas.

The collective struggle that we are engaged in Rio intends to bring to surface the other side of the favelas. It shows people how the state threatens our culture and our lives. In 2014 and 2015, the armed forces occupied Maré. The military occupation lasted for seventeen months and this raises a big question.

During those seventeen months, the Brazilian Federal Government spent 1.7 million reais (around US\$ 5,000) each day to keep the troops operational in Maré. If I consider my life time, the government invested 875 million reais (around US\$ 270 million) during a period of seventeen months to finance the military occupation of the Maré but, in the last six years, the investment in public policies has totalled 300 million reais (around US\$ 90 million). This is a huge difference.

We had one soldier for every fifty-five residents of the favela da Maré, whose population was estimated to be 132,000 people in the year 2000 (today this number seems to have gone beyond 200,000 residents). So, for a period of seventeen months, we had one soldier for every fifty-five residents. But we have never had a similar ratio of one doctor or one teacher for every fifty-five residents in the favela da Maré.

When we look at these figures, we start to compare the differences between public policies, those which are delivered to the population of the favelas, of the suburbs, which form

the majority of the total population of Rio de Janeiro.

In forty-four favelas in Rio, there are units of the "Pacifying Police Unit" (the "UPPs"). This is another policy that fosters the militarisation of the favelas and advances control over the black bodies and the poor people who inhabit these urban spaces.

In forty-four favelas, we have militarised police playing the roles of teachers, playing music appropriated from the favelas, imposing curfews and even trying to influence us in our historical struggles, as in the community media...

...which is growing in Rio, especially in those militarised favelas, where the army and the police try to take over control. When they cannot do that, they shut down community radios, threaten communicators and expel communicators from their own houses.

So what we have now in Rio de Janeiro is a collective movement of favela residents formed by an array of groups. We are noticing that the state does not allow us to organize ourselves because everyday we keep counting our dead.

Yesterday, the police shot a young man who was going to work. But he was black, and he lived in the suburbs. This is an acceptable dead body. We are facing a genocide of black people in Brazil, as well as of the indigenous natives.

The natives have been suffering this genocide for the last 500 years; actually, for more than 500 years. When the first Portuguese colonizers arrived, they began to massacre the natives. And so, for the last 500 years, we have faced the genocide of black people in Brazil.

Each year 30,000 young people are murdered in Brazil. They are young black men, residents of the favelas and the suburbs of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro or of any of the other provinces of Brazil.

We are fighting against the use of the classification of "resisting arrest" by police who are authorised to shoot and kill under this premise. We are fighting against the militarisation of life and we are fighting for an identity for black people, for indigenous people, for favela people. We are fighting for our memory and that is why we build our own museums, our own newspapers and why we give value to who we are inside those spaces in the favelas.

To finish, I would like to leave a message of solidarity with all the people who are oppressed by the state anywhere in the world. I would like to leave it in memory of all the people from the favelas and suburbs in all parts of Brazil, as we are the people who have been resisting for the last 500 years.

And I, Gizele, the same as any movement that I am part of, we are all continuing this struggle. We are not creating the struggle, we are continuing it, and we follow the examples of the many struggles that have been fought throughout the world by people who have been massacred but have managed to rebuild their lives, over centuries, for thousands of years. I hope we keep fighting on a global scale. That's it.

*Gizele Martins is a journalist and community communicator from the Maré favela in Brazil. She writes for the newspaper O Cidadão and the magazine V írus and is a founder of the Escola de Notícias and Historiorama .*



# Grupo Ecoanarquista (GEA), región chilena

## The new "cordial" pacification of the Araucanía

*Demonstration of the Mapuche people on one of the anniversaries of the 'discovery' of the Americas denouncing the repression they endured on the part of the state of Chile and the police abuses. Photo credit: antitezo (flickr). Published under the Creative Commons Licence BY-NC-SA 2.0*

On 23rd June 2016 Michelle Bachelet, the President of Chile, revealed her new "Plan of Recognition and Development of Araucanía", apologised for "having failed as a country", and for the "horrors and errors" committed by the Chilean state against indigenous peoples. However, beyond this late recognition, in the aftermath of her second government and after having driven the criminalisation of the Mapuche with the application of the "anti-terrorist law" in the zone where they live, we think it is necessary that we pause in order to understand what the Government is really intending.

This plan tries to respond to that which the media have dubbed the "Mapuche conflict", a terminology that subtly criminalises the cause of the Mapuche. In reality it revolves around the "occupation of Wallmapu", of the occupation of the territory that historically belonged to the Mapuche. According to the historian and investigator of the Observatory of Indigenous Rights, Martín Correa: "When the Mapuche communities raise the point: 'these lands are ours, we never sold these lands', it is the truth. These lands were legally usurped, but not legitimately by the Chilean state. And there is a continuity of this usurpation and the repression(...). We are talking about four generations of repression, of usurpation and of the death of those that the Chilean state does not want to take over".

There has been a recent intensification of raids in Mapuche communities, with children and adults injured, the increase in policing in the zone and its "militarisation". The ANI (National Intelligence Agency) and the Armed Forces work together develop a joint anti-terrorist intervention strategy, and the permanent threat of applying a "state of constitutional exception" decree, that will involve further restriction of the

Human Rights of the Mapuche communities and to provide the Army with control of the zone ...In other words, once more the same policy that has been applied for decades in order to try to subdue the conflict, with blood and bullets.

None of these problems are addressed by the ambitious "Plan of Recognition and Development of Araucanía" that the President now claims puts an end to the conflict. The "anti-terrorist" policy driven by the government was not addressed in her message so we can expect that what follows in parallel to the plan recently announced, invalidates it as a result and condemns it to failure. In other words, for the television cameras there is a soft-handed "cordial" offer, and for the Mapuche, the stick if they do not accept the plan that is offered to them.

What remains clear in the government plan is that it will initiate a process of a new institutionalisation of the conflict, with the objective of prosecuting the Mapuche and rendering them invisible.

Although the constitutional process that intended a new Constitution for Chile has failed, the Government insists now in Wallmapu, on driving forward the implementation of an "Indigineous Constituent process". This process above all has not been asked for by the Mapuche communities nor responds to their cultural horizon of conflict resolution. It is a strange component of the plan which will be an experiment and that of course will not respond to the true aspirations that the people have.

Apart from the creation of an onerous new bureaucratic institutional apparatus (ministries, institutes, funding, studies,



subsidies, investments, etc, etc.), the intention is to drive “productive development” in the Mapuche zone. This is the magic wand that neo-liberal governments use in order to give a “solution” to poverty. Because, despite the speeches, the Mapuche are far from being treated as members of a nation, of a social group with their own motivations and complexities, and instead will be treated as “vulnerable families”, with all the evangelical and capitalist neoliberal commandments that “solves” all of the afflictions of “the poor” applied to them. This, without considering that the Mapuche are not nor have ever been a capitalist people, that accumulate riches, trade or “undertake” through small and medium sized (SME) businesses as the technocrats of social development like to categorize.

A relevant point in the plan that merits a mention is this part:

“CORFO (The Corporation of Chilean Advancement) will design a Forestry Fund, that will begin to work in the second half of this year, for the planting, management and operation of indigenous plots suitable for forestry that the owners, the communities wish to allocate to this end”.

Neither with the forest fires of last summer, where the combustibility of the monocultures of pine and eucalyptus remained evident, nor with all the complaints that the

Mapuche make due to the drought and destruction that these plantations cause in their communities, does the government rectify its continued intent to benefit these crop types which are so damaging for the Mapuche and farming communities, and for the environment.

Finally, as a finishing touch, the plan considers the implementation of a “Policy for the protection and the support to all the victims of violence in the Region”, a strange entity that seeks to leave everyone alone; above all the Christian Democrats and the right. As a result, the government aims to deliver new subsidies to the timber industry and big businesses, as a form of appeasing their demands after calming the “political violence” as alluded to by the SOFOFA (Manufacturers’ Association) representative of the businesses, the local administrators of the transnationals.

Just as over 100 years ago the Chilean state tried a “pacification of Araucania” by means of war and occupation by foreign colonists, today it is by means of a more “cordial” nature but no less spurious, attempting the cultural assimilation of the Mapuche in the “vulnerable families” category, a brutal “help program” that is used for the large oppressed and exploited mass of multicultural Chilean nationals.



A volunteer screams in pain as Hollywood-grade prosthetics litter a football field strewn with body parts and gore. A “Muslim man” just fired from his job returns to his office as a figure hooded in black, takes an ex co-worker hostage, and yells he wants “to hurt the Jews for what they have done to him and his people”; a bucket bubbles over with smoking “chemical weapon” liquid at his feet; a banner proclaims, “We are the 99%” and “No War for Oil” with protesters lurking behind it.

These three meticulously scripted scenarios are typical of the “training exercises” demonstrated at conventions for SWAT teams—or Special Weapons and Tactics (previously known as

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Special Weapons Attack Teams). They are often accompanied by vendors selling the latest in high-tech military weapons, gadgets, and gear. Colt Guns, Boeing, and Combined Systems, Inc. (CSI) are frequent sponsors. These are accompanied by “shwag”: pins that urge to “face-shoot the mother fucker,” t-shirts that read “Black Rifles Matter” or “Keep Calm and Return Fire” printed beneath an American flag, and free bracelets featuring a black and white American flag with the “thin blue line,” symbols long associated with a “War on Cops” and the “Blue Lives Matter” slogan. Attendees, hailing primarily from police departments, are given a jam-packed weekend agenda, from workshops on the Israeli Defense Force’s Krav Maga

martial arts to presentations on the continuing growth of “Jihad in America.”

These SWAT trainings and police militarization conventions happen 365 days a year all over the world. In the United States, where the arms industry has become increasingly intimate with law enforcement and emergency response agencies, the federal government foots much of the bill.

Given the frequency and high drama of SWAT trainings, one would think that people in the U.S. live under a constant military threat. But an analysis of SWAT raid logs shows that police militarization is most commonly used for conventional criminal operations, drug busts, searching houses, and serving warrants. Contrary to the narrative that SWAT teams conduct specialized policing, they are usually called on for mundane, everyday crimes, and act using the hypermilitarized and aggressive skills with which they were trained. The murder of Aiyana Jones, a 7-year-old Black girl who was shot in a Detroit no-knock SWAT raid in 2010 after a flash grenade was thrown through the front window, made abundantly clear how war mentalities are enacted through SWAT killings.

How did we end up on this course of heightened police militarization? And, more importantly, how can we stop it?

## What Are SWAT Trainings?

In 1967, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Inspector Daryl Gates came up with the concept of SWAT based on his experience policing Black uprisings such as the Watts Riots. The War on Drugs saw higher rates of lethal force as the government transferred military equipment to police departments—a transfer that was motivated out of the government’s fear of Black liberation and antiwar movements. Post-9/11, the U.S. Patriot Act expanded law enforcement surveillance and the subsequent federal funding of military equipment and tactics for local police departments. The Pentagon’s military weapons transfer program to police departments—known as the 1033 Program—has distributed more than \$5 billion dollars in equipment since 1990.

SWAT trainings are often a major driver of the escalated police militarization we see in neighborhoods of color and protests across the country. Their increase is not subtle: While SWAT raids were estimated at eight per day in 1980, there are now approximately 137 SWAT raids a day that are used for everyday search warrants. This increase is driven by the growing prevalence of “SWAT trainings.”

What happens at SWAT trainings is a chilling vision of the kind of policing the Trump administration is expanding and intensifying. Occurring year-round, though often concentrated in the fall in the U.S., these events bring together local, state, regional, and federal law enforcement personnel, weapons industry vendors of all types (from the sellers of Tasers to tanks), and most ominously first-responders and emergency medical technicians/fire-department.

Always present at the expos are weapons giants, common war profiteer culprits such as Safariland, Combined Systems (CSI), Northrop Grumman, BAE Systems—all of which maintain major contracts with the U.S. and many militaries worldwide. Civilian companies such as Uber, CamelBak and Verizon sell specialized tactical items, or sponsor through advertisements. Conferences range from local events to crown-jewel gatherings like Urban Shield, called by many the largest SWAT

training in the world. Urban Shield annually brings hundreds of participants from every region of the country, and many global actors such as Israeli, Brazilian, and Norwegian police.

In addition to sites where law enforcement agencies plan their coming year’s shopping for new toys, they often host Hollywood-style “exercises” which simulate attacks or disasters to which participants “respond,” competing for top SWAT honors.

This brings us to one of the major ideological functions of these events: defining “the enemy.” It is no coincidence that notorious Islamophobic demagogues like Ryan Mauro and Sebastian Gorka have been keynote speakers at these events, since their (never validated) “expertise” on Islam and terrorism serves to generate fear of impending attacks in the U.S. and feeds directly into the ISIS and Al-Qaeda think-tank industries. The SWAT trainings also define who counts as an “insider,” by offering attendees the opportunity to network raffles, BBQs and pig-roasts (no pun intended).

Militarized mentalities rely heavily on cultures of fear, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and warfare logic of “us vs. them,” while successfully permeating through agencies, such as police departments, normalizing violence against those already deemed disposable, dangerous and/or “radical,” and dramatically amplifying the force of militarism through our communities.

Over the last year we have deeply researched 6 SWAT trainings/weapons expos across U.S. regions (Southern California, the Bay Area, the Midwest, and Upstate NY, among others), seeding cross-community campaigns to resist them, as inspired by solidarity work with movements facing tear gas in Egypt, Chile, and beyond. This work has offered many takeaways we find valuable for organizing.

## 1. It’s Not Just the Weapons, Y’all. It’s the Militarized Mentality Behind Them.

When campaigning against SWAT trainings, it is easy to get caught up in what arms dealers are selling at expos, and what the use-of-force industry is creating specifically for police. But it’s also equally crucial to look behind the weaponry and to address the militarized mentality and culture underlying it. It is only by exposing the ways that law enforcement officers are intentionally trained that we can begin to unpack the militarized mentalities of aggressive beat-cops and resist the aspects of militarism that affect people in everyday ways.

These weapons expos are regularly paired with workshops facilitated by arms dealers that market masculinity, defense industry solutions, and militarized mentalities. Workshops advocate for limited solutions to complex problems; for example, as the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) has done with a workshop entitled, “Talk-Fight-Shoot-Leave,” encouraging use-of-force solutions and “warrior mentalities” over de-escalation tactics. Use-of-force is often sold as a solution for scenarios involving mental health crises. (We’ve campaigned against conferences where SWAT officers are advertised as better equipped than medical professionals to deal with such crises).

It is thus not a surprise that SWAT teams, the foot soldiers of the notoriously racist “war on drugs” have historically brought a war-making mentality to the daily practice of policing and arrest.



## 2. Fear of “Muslim Terror” Justifies Black + Latinx Death

The threat of domestic Islamic terrorism is a regular justification for SWAT trainings, which is why they feature Fox News blowhards [braggarts] to claim that pockets of the U.S. are controlled by Islamist militias, or that the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) is an imminent threat. These gatherings are veritable Islamophobia factories: resisting them means fighting that type of hate and reminding people that actual domestic terror attacks are extremely rare.

But even while they peddle Islamophobia in theory, SWAT tactics are not primarily used against non-Black American Muslims in practice. Rather, hundreds of SWAT raids a day overwhelmingly target poor and working class Black and Latinx communities across the country. Islam is used a smoke screen to strengthen and enact a different kind of racism on the ground. This is notwithstanding the often forgotten fact that an estimated 25 percent of U.S.-born Muslims are African American.

This reality provides fertile ground for non-Black Muslims in the U.S. to work in accountable coalitions with Black and Latinx communities. The SWAT raids killing and traumatizing those communities are also promoting a paranoid political culture that legitimizes wars abroad. By targeting both police and militarization together, it's possible to challenge racist police brutality, surveillance of Muslim American communities, and the global “war on terror” all at once.

## 3. Reaching Beyond the Choir

Seeding coalitions across the country has provided an important, concrete way for groups to collaborate across a wide variety of identities and ideologies—a move for anti-sectarianism that is needed now more than ever. However, it is also where our work has often failed in its reach beyond the activist class. With the desire to lift up frontline communities, we frequently find ourselves closest to and most able to uplift young Queer Trans People of Color (QTPoC) voices that are often college educated, middle class and/or paid organizers and activists such as ourselves, who are able to have meetings and rallies during working hours. How do we break out of this habit and shift our organizing strategies so that we can truly

scale up our work in the ways that are urgently needed to shift power in the face of a neo-fascist regime?

We take inspiration from convergences that maintain community leadership and principles, reaching broad bases and mainstream minds, while pushing for visionary goals, such as the frontline work seeded by Indigenous-led #noDAPL convergence at Standing Rock or the consciousness shifting work that multiple Black Lives Matter groups have been achieving across the country for the past year plus. As this case study from North Carolina urges us, we must reach beyond the choir—now more than ever.

## 4. Ending Militarism Everywhere

SWAT trainings are the ugly tip of an even uglier iceberg. Militarism generally is permeating more deeply into social life. Despite the rhetoric that the Department of Homeland Security keeps communities “safe,” federal funding for police and law enforcement often harms those very same vulnerable communities—most obviously through purchasing drones, but also through insidious policies or regular police institution maintenance (such as paying officer over-time). Police militarization funding that promotes policing practices such as Broken Windows or “community policing” does not keep any community safe, especially already criminalized peoples.

We need new visions of safety that do not rely on counter-terrorism monies from the Department of Homeland Security or extreme policies of mass deportation, border securitization, increased vetting, travel bans, and border walls. We need real sanctuary spaces that provide refuge from the increased federal raids. We need to lift up groups leading the way in both shifting the culture, while also providing immediate support, like DRUM is doing by building local No Hate Zones across NYC neighborhoods, or Mijente by driving national sanctuary expansion, or Not1More by taking direct and strategic action against deportations across the country. We applaud all cities and towns that have joined the Sanctuary Cities movement (whether legally or symbolically). We call on more cities to become Sanctuary Cities, so that we may reclaim safety, and defend our cities’ and world’s most vulnerable. It is essential to bring the question of militarism into organizing on every issue. Right now, the connections have never been more insidious.

Engaging with militarism where we can recognize it first—in U.S. police, prisons, and borders—allows for the sparks of an internationalist connection to appear. Pushing for the U.S. public sector to demilitarize its institutions, question the increasing hybridity of policing and militarism, and rejecting Department of Homeland Security funding locally will hopefully orient domestic activists to better question international militarism more broadly, starting with the U.S. military’s budget of \$1.3 trillion (more than all global militaries combined). Perhaps then we can share a positive vision for a new internationalism—a global movement that leaves no one behind, and which prioritizes aligned solidarity campaigns over empty metaphors. One where “Not Here, Not Anywhere,” as a Stop ITOA banner in Chicago read, can begin to be realized.

## 5. War At Home?

We have been fighting SWAT trainings because they result in direct harm to some of the most vulnerable communities in the United States. SWAT raids show how there is a “war at home” for Black, Latinx, poor, Muslim, and Arab communities domestically. In reality though, “the war” is in no way here, and



remains fundamentally different from wars happening in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, Colombia, Somalia, and many other parts of the world. We raise this not to engage in Oppression Olympics, but to point to the scales of violence that are sometimes conflated in the service of mobilizing metaphors that will ultimately not lead us to the global solidarity and anti-militarist movement that this world, and especially this country, really needs.

Identifying and lifting up similarities between lived realities can be a starting point for building solidarity, but if and when ended there, it can become harmful to building meaningful relationships and providing material support that is conscious of how state violence and global violence differ across contexts. We call for building deeper connections between communities, and are wary of forgetting that U.S. exceptionalism is in effect even within our progressive organizing spaces. How can we create narratives and campaigning realities that assert internationalism in all aspects of our work? We call for organizing against Islamophobia globally—not just protecting the dignity of fellow Muslim-Americans, but instead all Muslims around the world being impacted by war and militarism. We call for organizing that asserts Black Lives Matter across the world, not just that Black American Lives Matter.

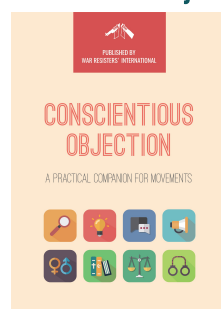
Most importantly, what is lost in this dynamic is that when you actually speak with them, Iraqis, Afghans, and Colombians often tell us that they do not want pity. Rather, people living amid conflict often want to be recognized first as human, and then, at times, as partners in struggle who have much to teach us in the global North about organizing in warzones, or under authoritarian regimes. As the Right gains strength all over the West, lessons from the feminists in Iraq that are building women's shelters underground in Baghdad, for instance, are crucial for us now as we scour for hope.

## Onward!

We hope these five starting points help organizers around the country shape campaigns, projects, and discussions aimed at dismantling police militarization locally, in the hope of denting militarism globally. Those near the Bay Area should hit up Stop Urban Shield coalition ; those around Chicago, Stop ITOA

# WRI bookshop

## Conscientious objection: a practical companion to movements



This book is intended as a practical companion for conscientious objection movements and all those whose work forms part of the continuum of war resistance. It has been written by activists who are campaigning against all kinds of injustice, all over the world. Learning from the lived experience of these activists, the aim is to help movements work together, surmount the external challenges they face, and enhance the concept of conscientious objection, using it in new and innovative ways – such as against war profiteering, or the militarisation of youth. The

book also has a specific focus on gender, and the often invisible role of gender, both in the war machine, and in the movements which oppose it.

Orders: £7.00 + postage

Coalition ; and those on the East Coast, or anywhere, hoping to learn more about resisting police militarization, contact War Resisters League .

Police militarization will expand under Trump with his promises for increasing already inflated public safety and border patrol budgets and agents. While we've been campaigning against SWAT trainings and weapons expos for years, the present political terrain almost certainly will offer no federal concessions (such as our long-standing demand for the Senate to cut UASI's budget ).

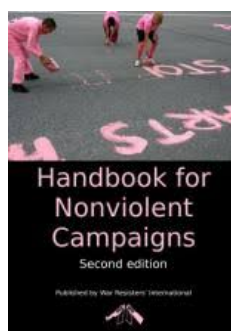
We will need to be in the streets, enacting creative nonviolent resistance, calling for policy reform and legislative shifts—but we also need to be embodying collectivism, willingness to work together, and a disengagement of policing and use-of-force culture: institutionally, with each other, and around the world.

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*Ali Issa is Field Organizer at War Resisters' League (WRL) in the United States and co-coordinator of WRL's campaign to end police militarization. He is originally from Iowa - among other places - and holds a Masters in Arabic Studies from the University of Texas. He is the author of Against All Odds: Voices of Popular Struggle in Iraq and also a member of the community funding committee of the North Star Fund, a foundation that provides grants to grassroots community groups. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.*

War Resisters' International offers a range of merchandise via its webshop. These and many other books can be ordered online — and some are even available for reading online or downloading as PDF. Check out the WRI webshop at [wri-irg.org/webshop](http://wri-irg.org/webshop)



## Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns: second edition

Social change doesn't just happen. It's the result of the work of committed people striving for a world of justice and peace. This work gestates in groups or cells of activists, in discussions, in training sessions, in reflecting on previous experiences, in planning, in experimenting and in learning from others. Preparing ourselves for our work for social justice is key to its success.

There is no definitive recipe for successful nonviolent actions and campaigns. This handbook, however, is a series of resources that can inspire and support your own work, especially if you adapt the resources to your own needs and context.

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## The Casspir Project

### Isiah 2:4 They will beat their swords into ploughshares

The Casspir Project is a multifaceted undertaking, comprising installation, photography, oral history and documentary.

The central element of the project is one of reclamation: a restored and refitted Casspir vehicle, its surfaces covered in elaborate, brightly-coloured panels of glass beadwork arrayed in traditional patterns and completed by artisans from Zimbabwe and the Mpumalanga province of South Africa including women of the Ndebele tribe, known for their craftsmanship.

The Casspir Project charts the locus of the South African military vehicle's legacy of institutional oppression – a legacy with which we are still reckoning.

Casspir is an anagram of the acronyms SAP (South African Police) and CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). Designed in South Africa in the late 1970s and brought into service in the early 80s, the Casspir was used extensively by the Apartheid-era South African Police, as well as by the South African Defence Force. Bulletproof and mine-resistant, the Casspir was very much a military vehicle, yet it was used extensively in urban, township areas in South Africa against civilian populations. By the mid-1980s, the Casspir was the ubiquitous heavy hand of apartheid oppression in the townships of South Africa, its mere presence a form of terror.

Anyone who has spent time in South Africa in the 1980s shares some history with the Casspir: it is as familiar as the smell of tear gas and burning tyres, as heavy-handed as P.W. Botha and his cadre of generals. Nothing said “police intimidation” like the

smell of diesel fuel and the roar of the 165 horsepower engine. Nothing was as potent as seeing one of these ironclad beasts flying through narrow township streets at 90 km/hr.

Ziman elected to leave South Africa in 1981 and has lived in the United States for 30 years. The Casspir Project represents the first comprehensive consideration of apartheid-era South Africa seen through the lens of the Casspir instrument.

“I remember columns of Casspirs, ten or fifteen, heading for the East Rand townships of Daveyton and Katlehong”, Ziman says. “Heavily armed paramilitary police sitting casually on the roofs brandishing automatic weapons. I remember Casspirs flying at high speeds down the narrow, pot-holed streets of Soweto. I remember how the South African police would park two Casspirs in the road to form a blockade, forcing the drives to slow into an S-shaped route for tense inspection”.

Post-apartheid, Casspirs were decommissioned in South Africa, their hulls left to rust, a relic of the past better forgotten. Except for the ones that were sold to the United States during the Iraq war years and, later, to local police forces. In the age of Ferguson and Black Lives Matter, the Casspir has returned; a poltergeist from the past which continues to haunt us. The issue of over-militarized police departments, who have purchased war equipment like one would buy LPs at a tag sale, has come to the forefront of the American debate on police tactics and aggression.

The Casspir Project is a vibrant, visual illumination of this through-line, as well as of Ziman's need to confront his own past and the country that he left behind. It is an effort to reconcile a history of devastation and foster a dialogue of where we are going and what kind of world we want to live in once we get there.



The Casspir Project debuted at the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town in December 2016 and has since toured South Africa after which the plan is for it to travel to London, followed by the United States.

Ralph Ziman was born in 1963 in Johannesburg, South Africa, and lives in Los Angeles, United States of America. He is a writer/director/producer of both music videos and feature films

and his work in film includes "Hearts and Minds", the first independent South African feature film to be completed after apartheid, and "Jerusalema" (or "Gangster's Paradise" in the US and the UK). An interdisciplinary artist, his work extends across a variety of media to include photography, public intervention (often in the form of murals), sculpture and installation. His series Ghosts deals with the international arms trade and Africa.



Protesters in Buenaventura, Colombia, dressed in mock police clothes.

This is a transcription of an interview. The video can be found here: [wri-irg.org/en/story/2017/colombia-militarisation-after-peace-agreements](http://wri-irg.org/en/story/2017/colombia-militarisation-after-peace-agreements)

My name is Christian Peñuela. I'm a conscientious objector. I'm part of an organisation called Colectiva la Tulpa. It's an organisation of conscientious objectors from the city of Bogotá, Colombia, South America.

As an organisation, we are raising the debate and being very critical of the public agenda in our country around the peace agreements already signed between the Colombian government and the Farc guerrilla. We believe that there is going to be an increased context of militarisation after the agreement in which, unfortunately, the investment in war from the Colombian state will continue.

The public spending is not going to stop and we think that's problematic. There are some new military doctrines - in this case, called the Damascus Doctrine - at this moment being constructed by the armed forces. The doctrine strengthens the military forces as the institution in charge of the main dialogue with civil society. We also question the fact that military service continues to be compulsory. After the peace agreements and other issues we are aware of, that's in this post agreement context.

There are also some free trade agreements, for example, the Free Trade Agreement between Colombia and Israel

that has been estimated at \$700 million and the military is going to be the third sector that benefits most. With Israeli companies of the state of Israel offering different services, including security and weapons, whose aim is to continue the context of militarisation in the rural areas and in the cities. Mainly, we are worried about the fact that it's going to be a heavy investment. We believe that it's going to be a heavy investment in military intelligence and that intelligence is going to be used to pursue different social movements in Colombia. In fact, something we are concerned about is that after the peace agreements signed on November 26th 2016, more than a 100 social leaders from different social movements like indigenous, farmers, afro-descendant, have been killed.

For us, it's problematic because this happened after the peace agreements. Mainly, we are also thinking of the fact that many of the youth of Colombia are going to continue being enrolled into military service. The issue of compulsory military service is still unresolved. We question why there is a compulsory military service, post agreement, where there is not going to be an internal conflict any more to answer to those demands that used to justify compulsory military service. We believe that our young people will become 'exports' - they will perform military service then will pursue a career abroad as mercenaries. At no time they are problematising access to opportunities. Their right to health, work and other things when, unfortunately, the state prefers to demand obligations from young people, instead of giving them their rights.



Something that we are particularly concerned about at the moment is the situation in Buenaventura. Buenaventura is a city in the Colombian Pacific coast and, right now, they've been on strike, more or less, 20 days. Buenaventura is Colombia's main port where 60% of Colombia's GDP, Gross Domestic Product, passes through this port. Buenaventura's black, afro-descendant communities or the afro-descendant movements are fighting for education. They are fighting for an education, for health that, presently, they haven't had and it's paradoxical as it's the main port and there has never been social investment in that port. Currently - I don't have the exact figures - but we know that many people have been persecuted, brutalised, and there has been a lot of police brutality, lot of stigmatisation and I don't have the figures but right now we know people have died or gone missing.

And at this time, this is an expression of the militarisation and the militarisation of the police at the moment taking place in Buenaventura, and the treatment given to social protest after the peace agreements. Then, as conscientious objectors, we have the great challenge of instilling in Colombian society that the resolution of conflicts shouldn't be through violence.

## Jamal Juma' on militarised policing in Palestine

My name is Jamal Juma', I am the coordinator of the Palestinian grassroots movement against the wall and settlements, which is ghettoising and limiting the population in very limited areas surrounded by walls nine metres high, with all the surveillance and cameras and watch-towers and machine guns that have been fixed there, and military guards that are patrolling the area. So these are the kind of things that they are doing and it is a kind of widening of the prisons of the people so you don't imprison ten or twenty people, no, you imprison the whole people. So the wall is kind of this.

This wall devastated the people's land and the reaction was demonstrations. We were facing the police, not even the police, the military. The military, fully-armed, and they come to kill, they come to make you bleed, they come to take you to jail, they come to paralyse you by shooting you in sensitive parts of your body. Using several kinds of weapons, testing them against us. From several kinds of tear gas to bullets, different kinds of bullet, plastic bullets, rubber-coated bullets, there are so many other kinds of bullets that I don't know their names. They are called something like "dum-dum" which is an explosive bullet that they shoot at your leg and explodes in your leg and your leg will be smashed. So all these techniques have been used against the demonstrators. I remember days when we were marching and suddenly, without hearing any shooting, we see the people who were walking in the march falling down, falling down, falling down. At the end they were sniping them with silent guns. They were knocking them down one after the other. This is horrible, these were people who were marching holding in their hands slogans protesting against their land being confiscated and isolated.

We try to work using nonviolent direct action. To be able to encourage communication roads and bridges between social movements and other sectors of society in the hope that there will not be more militarisation its everyday life in the rural areas and in the cities.

Ok. In Buenaventura, right now, the way they are reacting to social protest is not just with the police. But also, according to the city's social movements, the Marine Corps, the navy and other special groups have also taken part. To discourage social protest through a group called the Mobile Anti-riot Squadron (ESMAD) that always uses certain dispersion gases. They have very strong implications for the health of the people when they are protesting.

These kind of military techniques that they were using against us, unfortunately they have been transferred and exported to other oppressive regimes. We saw that in Latin America when we started activism in Latin America. We saw that the Israeli military and security companies are training different regimes in Latin America in oppressing their people, on how to attack and confront the demonstrators, the civilians who are demonstrating for their rights. They are exporting the techniques, they are exporting these evil ways of oppressing the people and harming them. Even lately, we saw that in the favelas in Rio and in Brazil where they are building the same system of surveillance and also the towers from which they are watching and sniping people and killing them in the favelas. So this is the danger of the Israeli military, not just the drones that they are promoting and selling to the world. The same with the military oppressions, the police oppressions. They are exporting the techniques. And they are teaching the other regimes how to beat their people, how to oppress them, how to suffocate them, how to imprison them, how to paralyse them.

*Jamal Juma' was born in Jerusalem and attended Birzeit University, where he became politically active. Since the first Intifada, he has focused on grassroots activism. He is a founding member of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange and the Palestinian Environmental NGO Network. Since 2002, he has been the coordinator of Stop the Wall.*

## The Fourth World War

When talking about militarism or demilitarisation, people immediately think of men in uniform, so when I say that I am anti-militarist, instinctively many people say: "but you're a woman and you don't have to do compulsory military service." True, but militarism is much more than military institutions or people in uniform. The military sphere has to do with the lifestyles that people adopt, their way of seeing the world, of understanding social relationships or how effective a society can be.

We assimilate military language in everyday life from many different quarters: through the commemoration of symbolic dates and the names of streets, squares, schools, etc. In short, militarism cuts across many aspects of life including those that could be thought of as being impervious to the military.<sup>1</sup>

Militarism has changed the way it acts to include areas that have not previously been considered military. Military institutions have responded to changes in society – including processes of individualisation, the "gender issue", job insecurity, economic and social vulnerability – increasing links with civil society, wage earners and the family.

This explains some of the reasons for women beginning to be integrated into the army, or into certain areas of power; each "step" taken generates lots of publicity in the press, on the radio and on television, expounding the idea that having women in the ranks makes the institution more democratic and modern, apparently in touch with society as a whole. But essentially, the intention of the military is for women to be integrated into organisations of power, perpetuating an authoritarian, hierarchical, xenophobic, misogynist and uniformed logic.

This militarisation could be labelled social, it is "social militarisation" because beyond the "modernising" changes made by Chile's armed forces, the intention is to update the way militarism is described as a powerful presence, a way for the military to dominate and intimidate society, thus consolidating a new relationship between civil and military order.

Militarism has made war the basic organising principle of society, and politics is simply in one of its means or pretexts. We could think of ourselves as living through a Fourth World War, which can be triggered anywhere, at any time, in any circumstance and with the whole world at stake, and which becomes permanent. Civil peace only means the end of one form of war and the beginning of another, the Fourth World War.<sup>2</sup>

We can trace the development of the phases of war as follows:

- Initial phase: The First World War (1914-1918) centred in Europe, which, after a tumultuous interlude, led directly to the Second World War.
- Phase two: The Second World War, with the German Army taking a major role in the world conflict of 1939-1945.
- Phase three: The Cold War or the Third World War "which depended on the way the Americans perceived the intentions and politics of the USSR, and vice versa ... instead of undoing the war effort and dismantling the machinery of war, sadly the process of pursuing, encouraging and increasing preparation for war continued: instead of disarming, peace was sought through rearmament."<sup>3</sup>



This rearmament gave way to a new type of global warfare that "introduced new elements, and was fought in numerous low intensity conflicts, simultaneously on different fronts around the planet"<sup>4</sup>, and began a transformation of defence, giving rise to our current state of civil war, leading to what we call "The Fourth World War".

Looking at this timeframe we can say that the First and Second World Wars, characterised by moving large numbers of people on the battlefields and powerful artillery exchanges, are confrontations of one power against another.

With the advent of the Cold War it is clear that "even a legal ceasefire"<sup>5</sup>, can't mean the end of war, rather it only changes its form temporarily. This war found expression in East-West confrontation, then with the demise of the Soviet Union, "the break-up of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the subsequent territorial changes break the bipolar scenario on which the Cold War was built." <sup>6</sup>.

In contrast, this Fourth World War does not take place in a specific scenario, rather there are many battlefronts with material elements, "war develops in connected scenarios, without apparent order and without visible lines of combat."<sup>7</sup>.

War is increasingly depersonalised, while it is unbelievably more devastating and dehumanising, it considers everything that prevents a human being from becoming a machine to produce and buy as an enemy.

Humankind itself has become the enemy, "a biopower in the most negative and most horrible sense of the word, a power that has death directly at its disposal: not only the death of the individual or of the group, but of humanity itself and perhaps the death of all living beings."<sup>8</sup>.

Within the new active and constitutive nature of war, it is increasingly hard to make a distinction between military and police activity. "In this way, war seems to have two opposing meanings simultaneously: on the one hand, it is reduced to police action; on the other, it rises to an absolute, ontological level through the technologies of global destruction."<sup>9</sup>.

So the big difference between defence and national security lies in the way the world sees and thinks about it. Defence used to refer to protecting a country's own borders, a more limited and isolated view, which was neither broad nor deep enough to include everything that was needed to protect ourselves, something bigger was required, on a par with the great effort and the victory of war. So the idea of national security was thought of at a world level rather than a strictly national one, with a tendency to extend the subjective security borders outwards, to more places, encompassing more geographical territory. This idea of national security also requires the country to be militarily prepared, in a state of constant alert. Therefore the idea seems to be that an actively configured world is a safe world, in fact, this active and constitutive character of security was already implicit in the various transformations of war we have analysed.

If war is no longer an exceptional situation, if it is part of the normal order of things, meaning we are already in a permanent state of war; undoubtedly war does not threaten existing power structure, nor is it a destabilising force, rather on the contrary it constantly creates and reinforces the current world order.

One of the tendencies that have marked the evolution of war in recent decades is that preparation for war and the right to wage war have tended to focus on national security, emphasising the idea of the enemy within.

The nation's interests and responsibilities, as well as threats and battle-fronts, have no limits and are global. "Those who talk about defence, talk about a protective barrier against external threats; in contrast, those who talk about security, justify constant activity both at a national and an international level."<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore "The nation and national defence must be in a state of permanent military preparation: war is no longer a military fact in itself, but it is a constantly developing phenomenon",<sup>11</sup>,

it is taken for granted that a country's security level is directly related to the numbers of weapons it has. The more weapons and weapon systems you have, the greater your security in a world which harbours potential aggressors. This assumption is highly dangerous and paradoxical.

"Firstly because it defines security only in quantitative terms of the capacity to inflict harm and defend oneself militarily. Secondly because the devastating capabilities of current weapon systems make defence and security impossible. Nobody can resist nuclear weapons. The only defence which current systems foresee is to take revenge. It is called mutually assured destruction. That means that if one power attacks with its nuclear weapons, the other is not able to ensure its own defence and survival, rather it can wreak reciprocal destruction on the first. Our security is this: knowing that if a nuclear bomb is dropped on us, the other will suffer the same fate. In other words, security is non-existent. We have to state categorically the falsity of these terms and hypotheses. What do words such as defence and security mean today? We have to expose its poverty as a concept based on the current system, and moreover show that the complete opposite is true. Thanks to our defence and security systems, we are living with insecurity as never before. That is to say that with ever more highly developed and more dangerous weapons, and with their ever increasing quality and quantity, the security level is going down, not up. Moreover: production itself, development and storage of weapons are counter-productive for security. Today, the existence of more nuclear weapons can only lead to less security."<sup>12</sup>.

Faced with this disheartening scenario, there is continuing resistance. Domination can never be complete however many dimensions it may encompass; as long as there are anti-militarists who dare to challenge the established order, there will always be resistance, dismantling the processes of militarisation which keeps us in check, dominated and disciplined.

The invitation is to act, do, create, both reflecting and developing critical thinking with transformative goals that, if we put them into practice, can challenge the establishment, including what keeps us as we are now.

1 An example of this are the many examples from culture and consumerism, I'm referring to fashion trends, which sometimes show a military influence (Prussian, Soviet, etc.).

2 Talk given by Subcomandante Marcos to the International Civil Commission on Human Rights in November 1999.

3 LEDERACH, John. El abecé de la paz y los conflictos. Madrid. Catarata. 2000. 120p.

4 HARDT, M. NEGRI, A. Multitud: Guerra y democracia en la era del Imperio. Argentina. Debate. 2004. 46p.

5 HARDT, M. NEGRI, A. Multitud: Guerra y democracia en la era del Imperio. Argentina. Debate. 2004. 62p.

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8 HARDT, M. NEGRI, A. Multitud: Guerra y democracia en la era del Imperio. Argentina. Debate. 2004. 40p.

9 Op. Cit 41p.

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11 LEDERACH, John. El abecé de la paz y los conflictos. Madrid. Catarata. 2000. 119p.

12 Op.Cit 133p.



Husain Abdulla

## Bahrain: “Undeclared Martial Law”

*A training exercise involving Bahraini and US police. Source: flickr*

*Originally published on OpenDemocracy.*

Six years ago, New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof described his experience of being detained during the aftermath of Bahrain’s Arab Spring protests as a glimpse “through a haze of tear gas, [at] hints of a police state.”

Kristof explained how even medical personnel like Dr. Ali al-Ekri – momentarily at liberty but facing lengthy imprisonment – were tortured and prosecuted for treating injured demonstrators. Noting that if it were Syria or Iran perpetrating such abuses “the White House would thunder with indignation,” Kristof implored the US condemn just as strongly the repression of allies like Bahrain.

Unfortunately, he could’ve written those same words yesterday.

But that’s not to say nothing’s changed. Since 2011, the “hints of a police state” have metastasized. While Dr. al-Ekri endured five years in prison, his profession – healthcare – has come under the direct control of the military. Police now run the ambulance service.

The incessant expansion of the security apparatus – or outright militarization – has infected more and more sectors of Bahraini society. In fact, it’s now been written into the country’s constitution itself.

On 3 April 2017, Bahrain’s king confirmed a constitutional



amendment that had been long in the making, already approved by both houses of the kingdom's rubberstamp parliament: military courts can now try civilians "accused of threatening the security of the state."

Previously, the 2002 constitution barred military courts from hearing cases against civilians unless the king had declared martial law or a State of National Safety. This is what took place in 2011, when the government established military tribunals to expedite the conviction of protestors, human rights defenders, doctors, and politicians.

By the end – after a masterclass in authoritarian judicial theater replete with forced testimony and boxes of unsealed, unregistered evidence – hundreds were imprisoned on charges stemming from free expression, association, and assembly.

The kangaroo courts were so blatant in their violations of due process that the US-hailed Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) urged the government to order immediate reviews by civilian judges and ultimately commute all convictions "where fundamental principles of fair trial were not respected" and "for offences involving political expression."

A year later, at its second-cycle UN Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights, Bahrain accepted numerous recommendations from other states reiterating these proposals, including one from Ireland calling for the express prohibition of "civilians being tried in military courts in the future."

Now, rather than fulfill any one of these reform obligations, the government has chosen to take the country down a path of unprecedented regression away from democracy – making militarized autocracy part of the fabric of the state. Activists have simply described the development as "undeclared martial law."

Yet the amendment doesn't necessarily come as a surprise to those familiar with recent trends in the Bahraini criminal justice and security sectors.

As noted above, the government has increasingly integrated the security apparatus into key aspects of society and even basic public services, like healthcare. In January 2017 – the same month King Hamad reportedly proposed the military court amendment – the authorities also restored domestic arrest powers for the National Security Agency (NSA), Bahrain's secret police.

Like the amendment, this decision both expanded the role of the security forces in everyday affairs and contravened a previous reform commitment. In fact, the government's earlier move to strip the NSA of arrest powers after its involvement in systematic torture, arbitrary detention, and extrajudicial killing in 2011 was one of just two BICI recommendations that had been fully implemented.

Within weeks of the NSA's re-empowerment, we were given a violent illustration of the deepening military state in Bahrain, as well as the intersection of these various outgrowths of the existing structure of surveillance and intimidation.

Sometime on the night of 26 January 2017, security personnel – dressed in the black masks and plainclothes that were features of NSA squads in 2011 – entered the village of Diraz

and took up positions near the home of Sheikh Isa Qassim, Bahrain's most prominent Shia cleric.

In June 2016, after the government announced it had stripped Sheikh Qassim of his citizenship and begun prosecuting him on charges stemming from traditional religious practices, hundreds of demonstrators launched a peaceful sit-in around his home. Bahraini security forces have since cordoned off the village and restricted access for non-residents, even imposing internet shutdowns and other near-siege tactics.

But this night, the authorities approached the tents as demonstrators were sleeping and opened fire with live ammunition. Mustafa Hamdan, 18 years old, was shot in the back of the head. A nearby paramedic attempted to provide emergency care, but the wound was too severe. Afraid to call the ambulance service, now run by the police, Hamdan was rushed to a private hospital.

However, once there, the staff said they were under orders to withhold treatment for suspected demonstrators until authorities were present. Desperate, with Hamdan losing blood, his brother took him to Bahrain's largest public hospital, now administered by the military. By the time he arrived – and while his brother was interrogated by security personnel – Hamdan had slipped into a coma. He died last month.

The paramedic who treated Hamdan at the scene was arrested and reportedly remains detained.

This is the face of Bahrain's new military state: a teenager shot dead by secret police, denied medical care by a securitized hospital system, and his paramedic likely awaiting trial before a secret tribunal. Notably, this is also the same military that the US and UK have rewarded with new arms sales and increased cooperation.

In the absence of strong and concerted international censure, the militarization process will only continue. One can only imagine what sector will be next – education? Commerce? Athletics?

If this comes to pass, the next time King Hamad dons a military uniform he'll no longer have to pretend he's running a 'constitutional monarchy' – he'll have turned Bahrain into yet another military dictatorship.

*Husain Abdulla, originally from Bahrain, is the founder and executive director of Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB).*



## Demilitarisation and Remilitarisation in Paraguay

*A march in Asunción denouncing the dismissal of President Lugo and demanding the truth about the Marinakue massacre on International Human Rights Day 2012.*

After the military coup that ended the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner in February 1989, Paraguay went through a period of social and institutional demilitarisation. This process began early in the last decade of the last century and accelerated towards the end of that decade and the start of the next, its pace set by the national political context. Four components define this process of demilitarisation:

The ending of the institutional triad made up of the government, the armed forces and the Colorado Party (which was the majority party and in government), incorporating the abolition of the requirement to be affiliated to this party in order to enroll in the Military Academy.

Progressive cuts to the military budget and the estates and properties of the armed forces so that by 2003, the percentage of GDP represented by the military budget had fallen to 0.9% from 1.4% in 1998. Military properties were vacated to the benefit of powerful civilians, as happened with the lands of Marinakue.

The discrediting of the armed forces due to the fear that the military coup attempts linked to the general Lino Oviedo would be successful and fear of the support that he counted on within the armed forces and the Colorado Party.

The discrediting of military service due to the death of conscripts, the existence of child soldiers and the use of soldiers as free labour for officials and non-commissioned

officers, as well as by the success of the struggle for the legal recognition and use of the right to conscientious objection, in which Paraguayan social and youth movements played an outstanding role.

Following on from this process of demilitarisation, Paraguay has lived through a process of remilitarisation for more than a decade, which continues into the present.

Militarisation, demilitarisation, remilitarisation and transarmament

An important debate exists around militarisation, especially concerning the forms that it takes in Latin America and the Caribbean, but not around the concepts of demilitarisation and remilitarisation. Here, militarisation is understood:

as the projection of two distinct but constitutive processes: one in which military institutions set themselves up as central actors across the whole field of public security policy and another in which civil institutions belonging to that field acquire a military ethos through the triggering of isomorphic institutional change mechanisms. Militarisation is a process in which the logic of the military paradigm is adopted, accompanied by a process of change in the distribution of power with regard to the structuring of state violence in favour of military institutions (Morales & Pérez, 2014).

Militarism is understood as:



a system, a logic and a set of norms, that perpetuates and recreates our societies and our daily lives, that perpetuates rigid gender norms and is rooted in hetero-sexist ideas about gender which define masculinity as physically powerful and aggressive and femininity as weak and passive. Ultimately, militarism depends on and recreates a racist and hierarchical world order which tells us whose life is worth defending and whose is not (Andersson, 2012).

Meanwhile, remilitarisation:

shows itself in the increase in the strength of troops and military spending; new purchases of equipment and weapons, the construction of new facilities, the appointment of active or retired officers to the Ministry of the Interior (Security), the higher ranks of the police and other public offices; the militarisation of the police; the creation of military units within the police force; the passing of laws and decrees which grant greater quotas of power and functional autonomy to the army, and joint army-police operations (Cajina, 2014).

Disarmament is understood as a “process of reducing armaments, military spending and the capacity to launch a military offensive which allows for the elimination of the harshest demonstrations of direct violence but which upholds elitism and militarism as well as civil delegation on matters of defence (Utopía Contagiosa, 2012).

Instead of disarmament, antimilitarism puts forward transarmament as a proposal for a paradigm shift on defence, which entails “progressively reducing the power of the military, reconverting that which is military to civilian ends and progressively increasing the power of the nonviolent; necessitating a paradigm shift in society and the participation of grassroots movements in the design of defence policies” (Utopía Contagiosa, 2012).

These concepts will allow an antimilitarist analysis of the process of demilitarisation and remilitarisation in Paraguay in recent decades to be carried out.

### **The process of demilitarisation in post-dictatorial Paraguay**

The fall of the dictator Stroessner did not immediately spell the break-down of the triad of the government / armed forces / Colorado Party but did signify the start of its disintegration. Social and institutional advances began to open the way to question the cultural predominance of militarism in Paraguayan society and it was to be the civilian responses to the threats of a military coup by General Lino Oviedo that would accelerate the process of demilitarisation in Paraguay. Lino Oviedo, already general, led or actively participated in attempted coups in 1996 (the events of April), 1999 (the Paraguayan March) and 2000. The decision in April 1996 of the president Juan Carlos Wasmosy to dismiss Lino Oviedo and twenty-seven commanders, chiefs, prefects and directors of the armed forces, reinforced the path of institutional demilitarisation. With this action – supported by the United States and the Organisation of American States (OAS) – Wasmosy positioned civil leadership as dominant relative to military leadership although not without dissent from within the armed forces, especially the army, which was embodied in Lino Oviedo. The signing of the Protocol of Ushuaia, which gave powers to Mercosur to suspend all relations in the event of a breakdown of democracy, can also be understood within the process of institutional demilitarisation in Paraguay.

The process of demilitarisation reached its peak under the government of the Colorado President Nicanor Duarte (2003 – 2008); symbolically it would be Duarte who, for the first time in the transition to democracy, did not have a military or ex-military man in the position of the Minister of Defence throughout the whole of his mandate.

Under the government of Nicanor Duarte, the process of remilitarisation that we are currently living through began. This can be observed from the moment when the both the government and the Paraguayan political elite felt that the threat of military autocracy represented by Lino Oviedo had been overcome, or was at least manageable politically and electorally, and an institutional normality that ensured governability had been established. Lino Oviedo had been transformed into a “democratic” political actor whose direct influence on the military had been removed. Furthermore, with the reduction in military spending, the military had been warned about the consequences of further coup adventures. Lino Oviedo, the symbol of military autocracy, was so reduced and rehabilitated that he was able to launch his candidacy for the presidency in 2008. Without success.

### **Remilitarisation in Paraguay**

The government of Nicanor Duarte restored civil rights to Lino Oviedo and, in doing so, symbolically bolstered the power and impunity of the military. In the case of the seven youths murdered during the Paraguayan March, the perpetrators not only went unpunished but the families of the victims were punished by the judicial system.

It would be the government of Fernando Lugo (2008 – 2012) which would give impetus to the remilitarisation of the country. Symbolically, at institutional level, once again a military man – a retired general – was put in charge of the Ministry of National Defence and the defence budget was significantly increased, reaching 1.4% of GDP by the year 2012 according to data from the World Bank.

Fernando Lugo, using the excuse of the existence of the EPP (Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo or Paraguayan People’s Army), declared a state of emergency and carried out joint police and military operations in the northern zone of the country (San Pedro, Concepción and Amambay). During the period 2009 – 2011, this part of the country saw five joint operations and the declaration of two states of emergency. At the same time, Lugo’s government issued the law 4013/2010 regulating conscientious objection, which unconstitutionally brought in mandatory civil service (with retroactive effect).

### **Marinakue and remilitarisation in Paraguay**

The ultimate expression of the dynamic of remilitarisation was found in the parliamentary coup d’état following the Marinakue massacre of June 2012 in which two militarised units of the National Police played a role: the GEO (Grupo Especial de Operaciones or Special Operations Group) and the FOPE (Fuerza Operativa Policial Especializada or Specialised Police Task Force). Landless farm workers occupying land that had belonged to the state before Stroessner passed it to its new owner, the politician and businessman Blas Riquelme, were evicted by a large number of heavily-armed and militarised police officers in a raid that resulted in the deaths of eleven workers and six police officers. The participation of military forces in operations carried out at the site of the massacre has also been confirmed.

The massacre that occurred in Marinakue was the justification used by the parliament to overthrow President Lugo. It fell to the National Police to take charge of implementing the coup, repressing those who demonstrated against the deposition of Lugo as an attack on democracy, both in Asunción and in the other departments of the country.

The Marinakue massacre was a fatal, but not logical, consequence of the process of remilitarisation that Paraguay was and still is living, under the gentle auspices of the United States' militaristic agenda.

#### Militarised policing

The way in which the different specialised groupings of the National Police acted in Marinakue can be seen to conform fully to the military forms and procedures on the use of force and its consequences adopted by the police command. These forms and procedures are:

- The excessive and disproportionate use of force with the aim of annihilating any resistance before it occurs. This means the use of a force six times greater than the maximum number of farmers present in the area or more than ten times greater than the number of those that National Police considers as having the capacity to resist. The excessive use of force is amplified through the use of automatic and lethal weapons and means of aerial surveillance, monitoring and intimidation: in this case, a helicopter.

- The farmers settled in the locality are conceived of as "enemies" to be eradicated from the territory, which must be invaded and cleared out. The farmers are not treated as citizens, as local inhabitants or as civilians with rights. The police assumed a discourse of friend / enemy reflected in the epithets of "invaders" and "supposed farmers".

- The planning of the police intervention to involve an encircling movement, a pincer-action, attacks by the rear-guard and the vanguard, the use of militarised grouping of National Police at the front and back and the presence of not yet militarised groupings (Orden y Seguridad or Order and Security) as a way of experientially involving them in the process of militarisation.

- The complete abandonment of the protocol of intervention in mass occupations based on human rights and introduced by the Interior Ministry,

The results of the intervention denote strategic planning on the part of military staff: the massacre achieved results in at least four areas:

- The total annihilation of the occupation resulting in deaths and injuries, legal charges and detentions amongst the farmers, as well as the total loss of their property and assets.

- The discrediting and defeat in the media of the landless farmer movement. It was not possible to reoccupy Marinakue until three years later. The landless movement has had little subsequent impact nationally.

- The overthrow of the "human rights sector" within the National Police and the Interior Ministry. The protocol of intervention in mass occupations was annulled and the minister fell. The commanders involved in the massacre were promoted.

- The overthrow of the centre-left government and the recovery of power by right-wing militaristic elements, at first by the PLRA (Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico or Authentic Radical Liberal Party) and then by the Colorado Party with the administration of Horacio Cartes, who promotes a powerful agenda of remilitarisation.

#### Ongoing remilitarisation

The post-coup governments of the PRLA vice-president Federico Franco (2012 – 2013) and of the Colorado Horacio Cartes (2013 until present) have continued and deepened the process of remilitarisation. Under the Cartes administration, the military budget has been increased (to 1.4% of GDP for 2014, according to the World Bank) and powers regarding the control of military operations have been removed from Congress. In order to be able to do this, President Cartes has achieved the amendment of Law 1337/99 on Defence and National Security, granting the executive the legal power to decide on the deployment of the armed forces in internal combat by simple presidential decree. At the same time, he obtained the sanction of Congress for Law 5036/13 which enables the armed forces to fight the EPP.

For seven years now, police and military operations have been carried out and states of emergency declared in the north of the country, cumulating in the establishment of the FTC (Fuerza de Tarea Conjunta or Joint Task Force), composed of the armed forces, the National Police and SENAD (Secretaria Nacional Antidrogas or National Anti-Drug Secretariat) by President Cartes, whose administration has meant years of human rights violations, restrictions on civil liberties, constant looting and infringements of the rights of the poorest in that area.

#### Conclusions

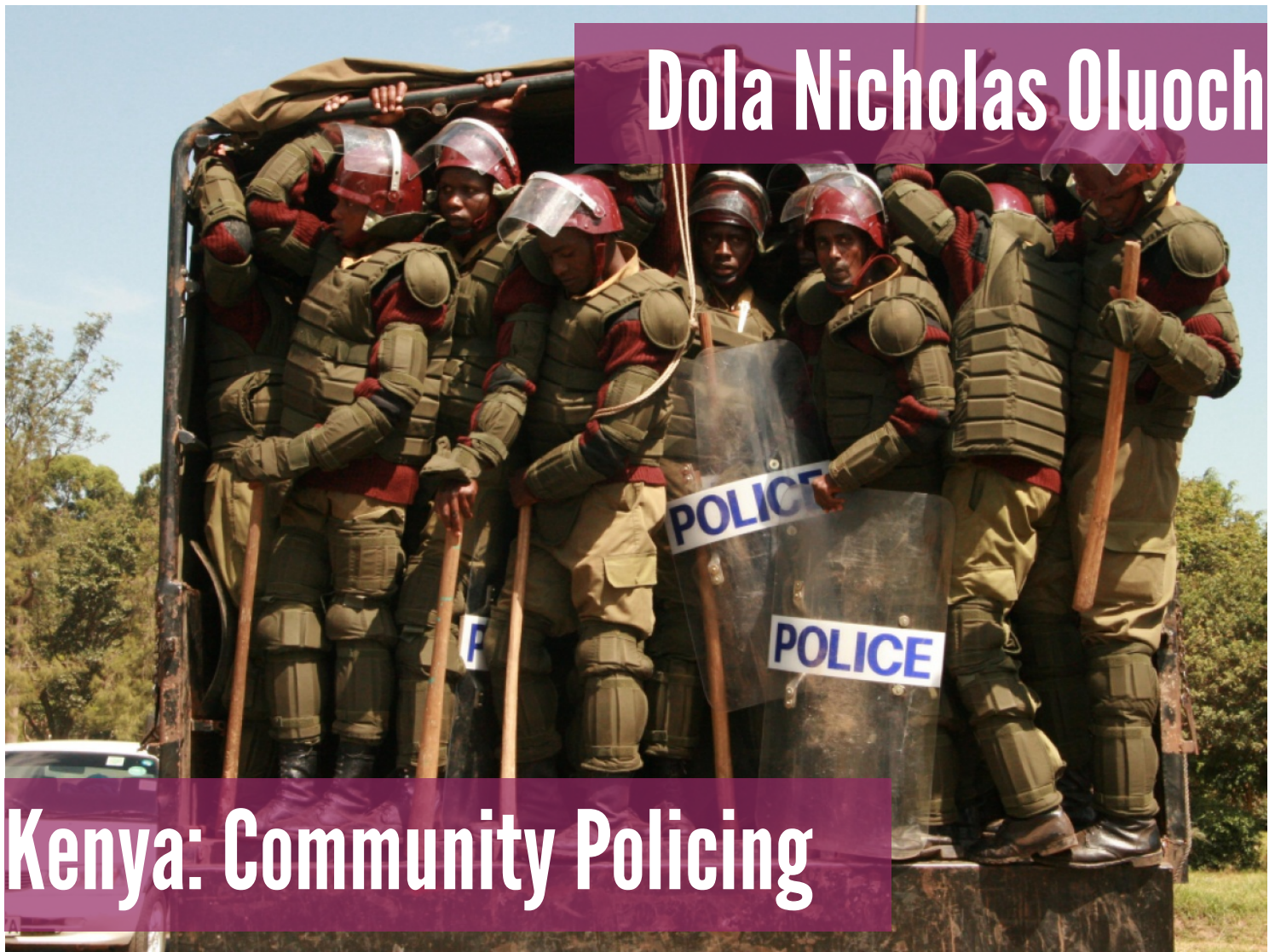
Demilitarisation in Paraguay was not an expression of an antimilitarist strategy as it did not question militarism in its fundamental aspects: elitism and the delegation of defence issues by citizens. The militaristic status quo, although superficially acted upon during the Oviedo emergency, was maintained. The foundations that support militarism in Paraguay were left untouched and the process of remilitarisation has not encountered many difficulties in establishing itself and recovering by 2014 a level of institutional power equal or greater to that which it had in 1993. Remilitarisation is a lived reality in Paraguay, especially the intervention zones of the Joint Task Force, and in the rest of the country where military logic is used to resolve any conflict or popular demand and deal with emergencies.

This article is an extract from a paper originally presented at the IX Workshop of the Paraguay Social Studies Group, "Paraguay in the Social Sciences", Asunción, June 2016.

#### Author information

*Pelao is a Chilean writer and organizer based in based in Asunción, Paraguay, and a member of the War Resisters' International Council. He is part of the affinity group GAAA! (Group de Afinidad Antimilitarista de Asunción), the Latin American antimilitarist magazine Periférica and the library and social centre La Comuna de Emma, Chana y Todas las Demás. In Chile, he was a founder member of the antimilitarist group Ni Casco Ni Uniforme.*





## Kenya: Community Policing

Kenya's police service is currently going through a reform based on recommendations made by the National Task Force on Police Reforms. Their report, known as the Ransley report, made recommendations to the Kenyan police that are based on democratic policing principles and suggests community policing should be a central pillar of policing within Kenya.

A lack of police accountability and civilian oversight of the police were highlighted as key issues within the report; it was recognized that the lack of procedural justice leads to a lack of trust and collaboration between communities and the police. Before this, organisations like Chemchemi Ya Ukweli (CYU) and individuals had identified community-based policing as an answer to the then growing levels of crime within Kenyan communities and culture of violence that came with this. Community-based policing is an approach to policing that brings together the police, civil society and local communities to develop local solutions to local safety and security concerns. For CYU this approach / programme aimed to improve relations between the police and communities and to enable them to work together to find solutions to community safety concerns.

Recently, the challenge of terrorist activities in the country has changed the dynamics and therefore the efforts and the investments into community-based policing in a big way, which are at an all time high risk of being eroded. Our experience of the work done to counter violent extremism in Mombasa (and the coast in general), where police have used lethal force in seeking to contain terrorism, is that these tactics lead to the

kind of situation that further breeds extremism. This has made violent extremism go underground and has not in any way eliminated the threats posed by terrorism and the terror organizations.

In response to the threats of terrorism the Kenyan government uses unnecessary force, possibly aimed at scaring communities and especially young people from engaging with terror groups. This has sometimes led to extrajudicial killings that have angered communities, driving them and especially the families of the victims closer to terror groups either as sympathizers or possible recruits, simply to seek revenge. This situation is even more threatening for returnees who would wish to disengage from terrorism and terror activities as their safety isn't guaranteed.

The serious disconnect between government agencies dealing with safety and security hasn't helped matters as their approaches are worlds apart. The Anti-Terrorism Police Unit works in isolation and the confusion and competition between the government's Nyumba Kumi (Ten Houses) Initiative and Community Policing Unit which are coordinated separately confuses civil society organizations and communities who ideally are supposed to be beneficiaries. However, for civil society organizations, the position and therefore the approach is different. CYU holds that "all life is sacred and of absolute value", including the lives of suspected terrorists. Going down to the basic reasons of why terrorism is appealing to the young people is thus very key to civil society organizations. Amnesty for returnees and proper process of reintegration builds trust,



fosters reconciliation and more importantly restores relationships. CYU therefore holds and believes that the absence of a multi-sectoral approach to these issues drives our young people away from us and closer to organized terror and criminal gangs, which leads to the militarization of our communities more and more each day. If nothing changes then the response will be even more militarized security agencies as the belief is that a “better equipped” and more militarized police force is better placed to deal with militarized threats.

*Dola Nicholas Oluoch is a Training Coordinator for Chemchemi Ya Ukweli, an active nonviolence movement in Kenya. His work focuses on training and facilitation in peace with a special interest in active nonviolence as an alternative to violence. He is also qualified to be a field team member of the Nonviolent Peaceforce, a non-partisan unarmed peacekeeping force composed of professionally trained civilians from around the world carrying out third-party nonviolent intervention in conflict areas.*



## Seohoi Stephanie Park

# Moon Jae-in Vows to Dismantle Police Conscript Force

*Conscripted police line up to form a barricade in front of City Hall Subway Station, Seoul, during a protest against a joint military amphibious beach assault exercise conducted by U.S. Marines and the Republic of Korea Marine Corps*

This article was originally published on 1st June 2017 in Korea Exposé. Reproduced with kind permission.

When young college students in Seoul went out to march through the streets calling for Park Geun-hye’s impeachment in a long streak of demonstrations that started last October, it wasn’t difficult to bump into an acquaintance blocking you — dressed in a navy military drab armed with combat gear. These policemen were some of the most visible — and the most silent — presences, patrolling the massive candlelight vigils that eventually contributed to Park’s ouster from office.

Who were all these policemen? No, not professional police officers, but young men in their college years, serving their 21 months of compulsory military service.

On Monday, Moon Jae-in vowed to dismantle the conscripted

police force by 2023, the Korean National Police Agency confirmed with Korea Exposé. Around 26,000 conscripted policemen will be replaced by professional officers, which is expected to boost the job market, and add credibility to Moon’s campaign pledge to create 810,000 jobs before his presidency ends.

“I think it’s a good move, both efficiency and security-wise,” said Jeon U-yeol, a former conscripted policeman who finished his duty in Seoul last year. “In a broad sense, I believe there are more benefits [to this dismantling], in that the [police] unit will acquire a higher sense of duty, and receive more systematic training — which the conscripted policemen don’t often get.”

Jeon added, “I do feel sad that young men will have to suffer more elsewhere, because conscripted policemen had been deemed a relatively easy way to serve your [military] duty.”



Thanks to the division on the Korean peninsula, military service is mandatory for all able-bodied South Korean men older than 18. The police force is typically seen as one of the more desirable positions for young men to be assigned to, due to its frequent weekly leaves. (This was probably not as relevant during Park Geun-hye's impeachment crisis, when tens of thousands of police were assigned on the weekends to watch over the massive civil demonstrations against the then-president.)

The conscripted police force has also been on a hotbed of social debate in South Korea over its alleged unconstitutionality; according to the Military Human Rights Center for Korea (MHRCK), it is a breach of law to use soldiers in their military duty as combat policemen.

"They are not just being mobilized to maintain public order, but are forced to suppress political demonstrations in the frontlines. This is all clearly out of the legal boundary," said MHRCK in its press release in 2015. The organization argues that it is not part of the conscripted policemen's original duty — "to assist in conducting public security affairs," as the law vaguely states — to be mobilized in political demonstrations, where regardless of individual political will, young men are forced to confront and endure violent protests instead of formally trained police officers.

The history of the police force has had a turbulent past. The conscripted police force (euigyeong) was first introduced in 1982, as a part of the 'combat police force (jeongyeong),' which was established in 1967 to ferret out North Korean spies and maintain public order. Combat police is crucial to remember, because its absence today dictates the changing — and apparently unconstitutional — role of today's conscripted police.

Under the Park Chung-hee (1963-1979), Chun Doo-hwan (1980-1988) and Roh Tae-woo (1988-1993) regimes,

combat policemen were mobilized to brutally crack down on civilian democratization protests. During Chun's presidency, students protesting against his dictatorship were forcefully sent to military service, who were then deployed to the combat police unit. There was even a name for this, called an afforestation campaign — to 'greenwash' the 'Red bandits.'

This idea was actually pretty smart — it was assumed that the protesters would go easier on their friends in the police.

Baek Hyun-seok, a former combat policeman who served in the military under Roh, was one of the hundreds (some estimate thousands) caught during these vigils. Baek was forcefully drafted to serve as a policeman during his military service. "About 200 of us, out of the 400 who joined the army together... were sent to become a [combat] policeman. I was dispatched to the forefront down in Gwangju."

In 2013, the combat police force was finally dismantled amid criticisms and lack of manpower. In its absence, conscripted policemen increasingly took charge of what the combat policemen used to do — to set up barricades and confront protesters out in the streets.

Former president Roh Moo-hyun initiated attempts to phase out the conscripted police force by 2012, but his plans fizzled out during the succeeding conservative administration under Lee Myung-bak.

Newly-elect Moon Jae-in, following the pursuit of his mentor/liberal predecessor Roh, is carrying on with the unfulfilled goal. Starting in 2018, the force will be reduced by 20 percent each year, and completely replaced with professional soldiers within five years.

*Seohoi is an intern at Korea Exposé and an undergraduate student at Yonsei Underwood International College, where she studies Political Science and International Relations.*

# The Broken Rifle

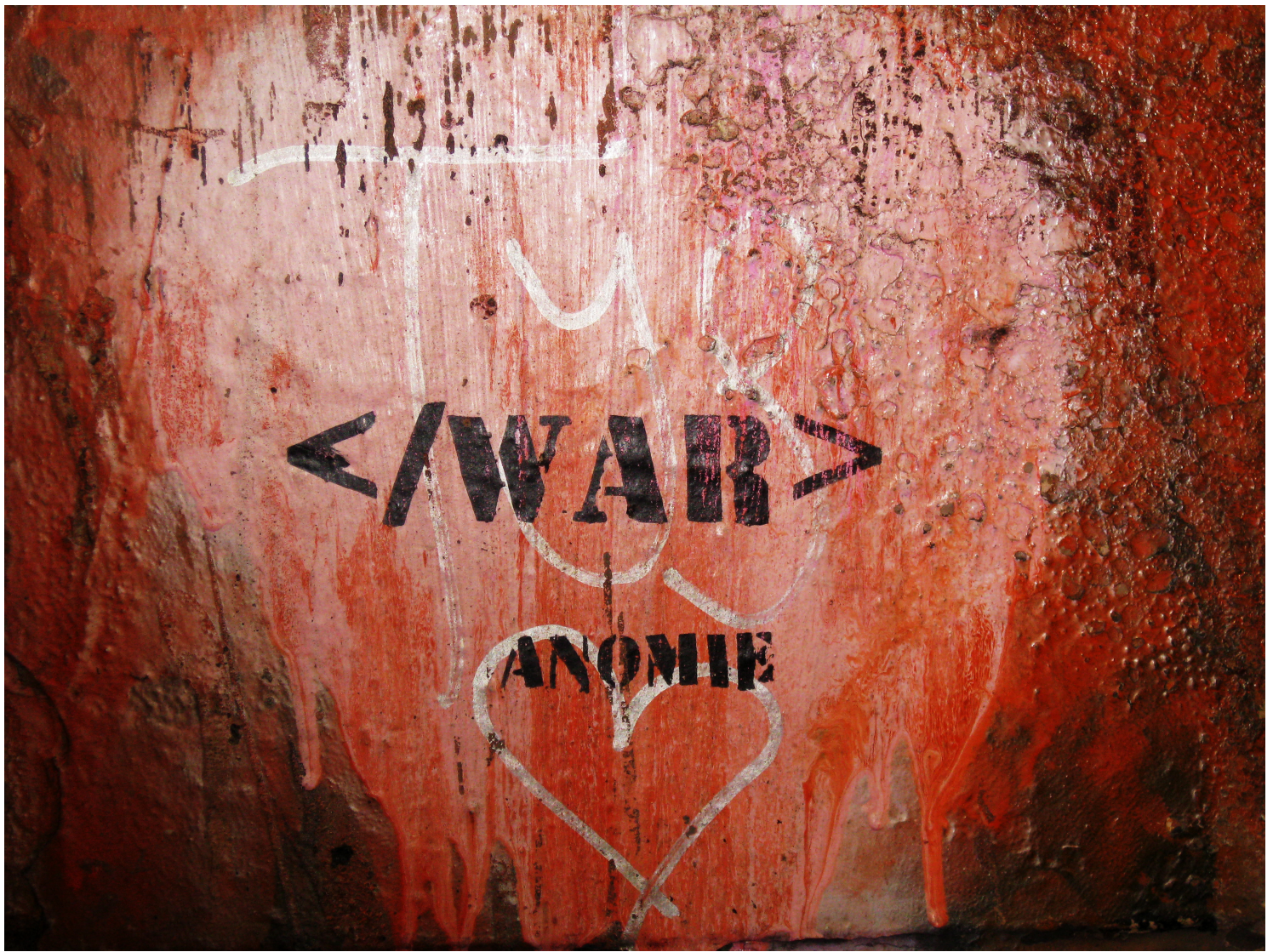
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## Militarism: what is it good for?

Absolutely nothing, apart from killing people and animals; damaging the environment; driving nationalism and the idea of an 'enemy'; increasing incidences of sexual violence against women; taking people away from

socially productive industries and into the war machine; reinforcing patriarchy and a binary concept of gender; making some people very rich; making other institutions - like the police and border forces - more violent; destroying infrastructure; creating mental ill-health in those who are trained to kill; driving people out of their homes in situations of war...

We could go on.

In the forthcoming edition of *The Broken Rifle*, we want to go back to the foundations of why pacifists consider war to be a crime against humanity, and are striving for the transformation of militarised societies. We're going to include stories of militarism and war as they are happening now, and ask what it is like to live with its effects in a community. But, we don't just want to focus on the problem! We'd also like to hear about the

resistance that is we know is taking place in these contexts!

If you'd like to contribute a story, write to us at [info@wri-irg.org](mailto:info@wri-irg.org) We need stories of 800-1200 words, with pictures, by 6th December.

Thank you!